DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 219 EC 202 001

AUTHOR Peires, Juliette
TITLE The Presentation of Projects by High School Pupils in a Gifted Programme.
PUB DATE Jun 84
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the International Conference: Education for the Gifted "Ingenium 20007" (Stellenbosch, Republic of South Africa, June 26-29, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication Skills; Enrichment Activities; *Gifted; High Schools; *Independent Study; *Research Projects; Speech Skills; *Student Projects; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Presentation Mode

ABSTRACT

Guidelines are offered for helping gifted high school students present oral and written presentations of individual learning projects. Students need to work toward a goal and accept responsibility for presenting the project formally. Written reports foster discipline, completed projects, and documentation for further study. Verbal reports offer advantages of providing immediate feedback, improved self-image, development of oral communication skills, and the ability to stress the most important points. Presentation audiences should comprise only those interested in the project or the presenter including parents, the school principal, teachers, mentors, and other interested students. Among administration difficulties that need to be overcome are finding an appropriate time period and place, obtaining necessary equipment, and providing for small group work. Also briefly noted are advertising of the presentation, teamwork projects, and various methods of presentation (direct lecturing, demonstration, video extracts, slide tape shows, dramatic performances, and art shows). (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

THE PRESENTATION OF PROJECTS BY HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS IN A GIFTED PROGRAMME

JULIETTE PEIRES
HERZLIA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mailing Address

Mrs J Peires
Herzlia Senior High School
P O Box 3508
CAPE TOWN 8000
South Africa

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Peires

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Subject Category

Methodology

Neither this paper nor any version close to it has been, or is being, offered for publication. The paper will be presented orally at **Ingenium 2000** by the author.

J Peires

(Signed) J PEIRES

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ED292219

EC 202 001

THE PRESENTATION OF PROJECTS BY HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS IN A GIFTED PROGRAMME

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The selection has been made, the pupils involved in the programme have completed their projects; they have learnt the special techniques required for the handling of their subjects; they have read, researched, measured, interviewed, calculated, correlated; they have accumulated facts, formulated theories, developed ideas.

1.2 Now the time has come to turn the project to good use in a general sense, so that it will provide a foundation which will benefit all future work. Not only should the pupils have learnt investigative techniques that can be carried over into other areas, or into future development of the researched area, but they should have started accumulating a basis of written and spoken reporting facility as a by-product of every project.

1.3 This paper is based on experience gained in handling subjects at High School level, and is focused particularly on presentation. The policy discussed is that which is followed at Herzlia Senior High School, and which has proved successful during the year of operation of our Gifted Child Programme. The programme is known as "H.E.L.P." the Herzlia Extended Learning Programme. The title was actually coined by two of the pupils involved.

1.4 When a pupil agrees to participate in the Extended Learning Programme, he undertakes to work towards a goal. When that goal has been achieved to his satisfaction, he accepts responsibility for formally presenting his project.

1.5 Until now, the pupil has been given the choice between producing either a written or an oral presentation. However as a result of our experience of the past year, each pupil (or group of pupils) will in future be required to provide both a full written report and a lecture or demonstration.

2. WRITTEN REPORTS

The advantages in insisting on proper recording and documentation of completed studies are obvious.

2.1 Whereas pupils enjoy the field work, the reading and the general research, they resist the tedium of sitting down and formulating well-written, explanatory reports. However no project will be considered complete until such a report has been compiled.

2.2. The discipline entailed in being obliged to present their findings written down, prevents pupils from lightly undertaking investigations and then leaving them improperly completed. They develop reliability and a measure of commitment to their task.

2.3 The written reports are usually lengthy and detailed. The topics are properly described and problems stated. Methods of overcoming problems are detailed. Reports can be fully discussed. The material contained in them can be studied at leisure.

2.4 Such reports serve not only as a foundation for further study on the same topic by their compilers, but also act as guidelines for future research by other pupils.

2.5 Sometimes, even among talented scholars, sloppy presentation, poor spelling and lack of form are a source of surprise. Insistence on properly written reports should have a beneficial

effect which should carry over into academic subjects.

3. VERBAL REPORTS

3.1 There are many reasons for insistence on verbal reports.

3.1.1 With written reports, pupils are not always aware of positive benefit, but with verbal reporting, feedback is immediate and obvious. The pupil realises that his work is being taken seriously, and that there is a critical audience ready to share his discoveries and discuss his theories.

3.1.2 Many scholars who are particularly talented are reticent about communicating their ideas to others. They are nervous and worried about the impression of themselves that they may create, particularly among their peers. The do not wish to stand out, or to seem odd. When talking to an interested audience they invariably receive sufficient positive reaction to improve their self-image.

3.1.3 They develop the attitude that they have something to offer, some knowledge or idea that it benefits others to hear.

3.1.4 If we wish our gifted and talented pupils to become leaders in the community, they must be able to talk in public without embarrassment.

3.1.5 While presenting their projects verbally, they learn to feel at ease with an audience, and capture attention.

3.1.6 They should eventually learn to guage reaction, to hold attention once it has been captured, and to establish a rapport between themselves and those listening to them.

3.1.7 They learn to express themselves clearly, not only from the point of view of articulation, but also as far as their method of explaining their material is concerned.

3.1.8 In order to prepare their presentations properly, it is necessary for them to analyse the material they have gathered, decide on the most important points, and make sure that hearers know what these points are. They must see that their audience does not get bogged down in trivia and side-issues. They need to have sufficient fact and opinion to give their talk substance, but not so much that the listeners reach saturation point in concentration.

3.2 AUDIENCE

The composition of the audience is of vital importance to the novice speaker. Only people interested in the project itself, or in its presenter should be invited to attend. Their attitude should be positive and encouraging. The aim is to build confidence, not to break it down, particularly in the timid, more diffident pupil.

3.2.1 Parents are invited. Involved parents have already given permission for their children to participate in the Extneded Learning Programme, and they are usually keen to see what has been achieved. Some pupils do not wish their parents to be present, and their inclusion in the audience is dependent on what arrangements they make among themselves. In most instances there is a great deal of interest on the part of the family, and frequently both mothers and fathers make a special effort to attend. Often brothers and sisters come too.

3.2.2 The interest of the School Principal adds status to the whole programme. If she is available to come to the presentations, the entire scheme attains additional importance, and this acts as a spur to would-be participants. However some subject-orientated topics are obviously of more interest to the Principal than others, and it is often impossible for her to spare the required time. Care must be taken that the pupils do not infer that the presence of the Principal implies approval of a project, and her absence is in any way a sign of disapproval, either of themselves or of their studies.

3.2.3 Teachers are invited, and are encouraged to attend, whether they teach the children involved or not. Their willingness to hear the topics and participate in the discussion is much appreciated by all present. There is a role change. The student demonstrates his knowledge, and the teacher is prepared to accept information from him. This creates a spirit of goodwill and a great deal of mutual respect.

3.2.4 The mentors, that is those experts who guided and assisted the pupils in their investigations, are invited to the presentations. They are always interested in coming to hear what the pupils have made of their projects. They are best able to assess to what extent original and creative work has been completed because as specialists in the field under discussion they know the material that has been learned or read. They are able to assist at question-time by answering questions which the students themselves with their limited knowledge are unable to answer.

3.2.5 An invitation is extended to the pupils of the school. Those interested in the topic are encouraged to attend and to ask questions.

3.2.6 Finding a suitable audience for highly technical and difficult projects presents a problem. In accordance with its very nature, an extended learning presentation is often demonstrated at a high academic level, and a basic knowledge of certain aspects of the topic is required before any understanding of the research can take place. The number of pupils or even teachers in the school population who have sufficient background to be able to participate meaningfully in a discussion is very limited.

3.3 ADMINISTRATION DIFFICULTIES

There are certain difficulties involved in the organisation of the presentation of numbers of different projects.

3.3.1 It is difficult to find a suitable period which is long enough for the project to be presented without haste and give time for discussion. Pupils must be available without missing lessons or sporting fixtures. In a school where scholars have to travel long distances, it is not practical to arrange meetings after school when the pupils are likely to miss transport home. A minimum of 45 minutes is required for a "lecture" and question time, and although a weekly long lunch hour has been planned to accommodate just such meetings, there are often clashes of interest such as choir rehearsals, other outside speakers, tutorials, etc.

3.3.2 It is not always easy to find a suitable, available venue. It is impossible to guage the size of the prospective audience in advance, and a sufficiently large room must be found in case the topic proves popular and many pupils wish to attend. If a Science or Biology subject is being demonstrated, it may be necessary to use the laboratories and the co-operation of the Science/Biology teachers

is essential.

3.3.3 When projects are to be demonstrated, care must be taken to ensure that the equipment required is available. Audio-visual equipment in particular must be reserved well in advance. It is necessary to check that it is in good repair. It has happened that required appliances were in the workshop, having broken down just before they were needed.

3.3.4 Some pupils work individually, but many prefer to work in groups. It is difficult for these pupils to arrange meetings on a regular basis, especially if the members of the group are in different classes or live in different areas.

3.4 "ADVERTISING"

Posters placed on strategic noticeboards, and announcements made at assembly or over the intercom. system, are the means used to make pupils aware that a project is to be presented. The poster illustrated overleaf invited pupils to attend the presentation of a project formally entitled "To investigate the mechanism of normal and abnormal lipid transport in the plasma."

3.4.1 There are unexpected hidden pitfalls in the design of posters. Several areas have proved to be sensitive. For example, mention on posters of orphanages, divorce or adoption are to be avoided.

3.4.2 There is a delicate balance between over-advertising and under-advertising. If too much publicity is given there is resistance; too little, and many pupils who are interested are not aware of the time and place of the presentation.

H.E.L.P.

(Herzlia extended earning programme)

Medical research project on 'Fats'

Venue: Lecture Theatre

Date: Friday 17 February

Time: 12-50pm 2nd break

(Of special interest to all prospective doctors and all biology students.)

3.4.3 Advertising must be strictly honest. False advertising leads to false expectations, and when these are not fulfilled, pupils are wary of giving up their precious breaks to attend future presentations. For example, one lecturer was supposed to demonstrate a working robot. The lecture theatre was packed with pupils who came to see the robot move cold drink cans, and when the presenter spoke about the technicalities involved in getting a robot to work, but no demonstration took place, there was much dissatisfaction.

4. TEAMWORK

It is interesting to notice how many gifted children enjoy working in teams. The social contact involved seems to be a valuable part of the project experience. The group enjoys the goal-directed, shared activity. Friendly team spirit is much in evidence. A large measure of co-operation both in design and execution is demonstrated in the oral presentation. Members of the group take turns in explaining what has been done, in leading the discussion and in answering questions. Even when one pupil is the motivator and leader of the project, the co-operation of the others in carrying out routine tasks, the discussion about and questions of results obtained, and the ideas propounded enhance the quality of the investigation and the clarity with which the results are interpreted.

5. METHODS OF PROJECT PRESENTATION

Although all projects are not perfect and polished, the pupils must still be prepared to talk about what they have done, and to answer questions. The method of presentation can take a number of different forms.

5.1 Direct lecturing, the giving of information and the expressing of opinions.

5.2 It is difficult to find publishers for written articles. A scholar's article usually lacks the polish, depth and referencing required by specialist journals, which are in any event more than adequately supplied with suitable material by experts in the different fields. However, the article can be typed and distributed among interested parties. Those who have read it can then be invited to a discussion with the author who is called upon to defend his views.

5.3 Some pupils who have done research work in a laboratory may present their projects in that laboratory. They can demonstrate the techniques acquired, and then explain the conclusions reached.

5.4 Pupils who go out into the field to do research, need to present the results of their investigations at school, away from the laboratory where their experiments were actually conducted. They need to describe what they have done, and illustrate their descriptions verbally, by means of drawings, transparencies and slides.

5.5 Pupils may be able to illustrate their work with video extracts. Unfortunately the equipment required for this type of presentation is very expensive, and is therefore not readily available. When available, the type of video equipment to which most schools have access does not have edit facilities, so that the decision about exactly what is to be filmed, must be clearly established in advance. Care must also be taken to ensure that the venue where the filming is to take place is adequately lit.

5.6 Pupils may present their projects by means of slide-type shows. This method is most effective, particularly for history, geography and nature projects.

5.7 Pupils who write poetry, may give poetry readings and explain their own work.

5.8 In some dramatic performances, plays may be written, directed and acted by the pupils.

5.9 Art shows may consist of works by one or more pupils. It might be a good idea if several schools could occasionally combine to present art shows, when pupils produce work of sufficient calibre.

5.10 In a "presentation" of a completely different nature, pupils who have had their syllabi compacted are often happy to give tuturials to weaker pupils in their own classes, or to younger pupils.

6. In presenting their projects pupils give evidence of great depths of understanding of issues involved and problems encountered.

6.1 When an investigation has been carried out "in the field", many original ideas and insightful observations are made. Where human relations are involved, pupils are exposed directly to situations, and their opinions are based on observation, personal experience, and atmosphere. One girl said, "This study has been a rewarding experience. Not only did I learn many things, but I was forced to think of things of which I was ignorant before. I now see events and situations around me in a new light". Another, after visiting an orphanage, remarked, "I felt absolutely bewildered. I thought I would never find my way in the maze of passages. And I am 15 years old! Imagine how all this must have appeared to a small child, finding himself here for the first time."

7. CONCLUSION

Pupils preparing investigations learn the techniques required for conducting their research. Those involved in science projects learn laboratory skills, those involved in community orientated projects learn interviewing and reporting skills, and so on.

But common to all is the need to learn how to communicate their discoveries, both in writing and verbally.